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Fifty-third session
**Third Committee**
Agenda item 108
**Elimination of racism and racial discrimination**

## Letter dated 30 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 30 October 1998, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 108.

(*Signed*) Volkan **Vural**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-33743 (E) 051198

## Annex

## Letter dated 30 October 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/53/18), which contains, *inter alia*, the concluding observations of the Committee on the fourteenth periodic report submitted by the Greek Cypriot administration (CERD/C/299/Add.19), and to bring to your attention that the Turkish Cypriot side considers this report unacceptable in view of the erroneous and biased information it contains.

References are made in the report of the Committee to the "Government of Cyprus". It should be recalled that the 1960 bi-communal Republic of Cyprus, established by the 1959–1960 agreements on Cyprus, has been destroyed by force of arms in 1963 by the Greek Cypriot side. As a result of the Greek Cypriot armed onslaught, the machinery of government of the partnership state was illegally usurped by the Greek Cypriots. The continuous violations of the 1960 constitution by the Greek Cypriot side thus rendered the so-called "Government of Cyprus" illegal and unconstitutional. It follows, therefore, that the Greek Cypriot administration has no legal right to claim to represent the Republic of Cyprus as established in 1960 or to speak on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots or the island as a whole. The legitimate representatives of the Turkish Cypriots are those elected under the constitution of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The report also refers to the "invasion", "occupation" and "continued division" of the island based on the one-sided information provided by the Greek Cypriot side. The Turkish intervention in 1974, in the wake of a *coup d'état* staged by Greece and its collaborators in Cyprus, was carried out in accordance with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, in order to prevent the forcible annexation of the island to Greece and to protect the Turkish Cypriots against the onslaught by Greek Cypriots. Furthermore, by 1974, the island had already been divided for 11 years as a result of the Greek Cypriot armed onslaught in December 1963. It should be recalled that a "green line" was established in early 1964 to prevent Greek Cypriot atrocities against the Turkish Cypriot people and that a United Nations peacekeeping force had been dispatched to the island in March 1964 to police this line.

It is rather unfortunate that the report concludes, in paragraphs 332 and 339, that the Greek Cypriot administration "is still prevented, by the use of force, from implementing the provisions of the Convention" in the North and is "prevented ... from undertaking any census or other relevant data collection" on the whole of the island. These allegations are based on the false premise that the sovereignty of the Greek Cypriot side extends over the island as a whole, including Northern Cyprus. The reality is that ever since the forcible destruction of the partnership state in 1963, the illegal writ of the Greek Cypriots has never extended to areas administered by the Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Cypriot side has no control or any say over Northern Cyprus, which is under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As is well known, as a practical consequence of the events of 1963–1974, parallel administrative, judicial and legislative organs for each of the two peoples have emerged. The Turkish Cypriot people have formed a democratic and secular state, with a plural system based on free elections, social justice and the rule of law, and its citizens enjoying all human rights and liberties.

Furthermore, it is ironic for the Committee to express concern about the Greek Cypriot side's "inability" to implement international instruments when the historical record shows clearly that during the period 1963–1974 even the most fundamental rights of the Turkish Cypriot people, including their right to life, liberty and security, were grossly and

systematically violated. The world witnessed a wave of unprecedented cruelty which culminated in an ethnic cleansing operation against the Turkish Cypriots. The periodic reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations bear solid testimony to the flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Turkish Cypriots during that period. The conditions under which the Turkish Cypriots were forced to live was described by the Secretary-General as a "veritable siege" (see S/5950 of 10 September 1964). Therefore, all references to the "forcible prevention of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention" or to the "artificial division of the island that hinders efforts to reduce tension among the communities", can only be described as seriously misguided or totally hypocritical.

I would like to emphasize that the underlying cause of the ongoing tension on the island is the massive militarization campaign of the Greek Cypriot side, coupled with its hostile and provocative policies against the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The ongoing embargoes and restrictive measures employed against Northern Cyprus are glaring examples of the discriminatory policies of the Greek Cypriot administration.

While the report welcomes, in paragraph 336, the "efforts and initiatives" of the Greek Cypriot administration in the field of education, there is no mention of the fact that the education system in South Cyprus aims to spur militancy among the population against the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey. A recently published official report on education by the Greek Cypriot administration has confirmed that the primary aim of education in South Cyprus is to teach Greek Cypriot children not to forget the so-called "occupation". One educational programme taught at schools is called "I get to know, I do not forget, I struggle against the occupation". The Greek Cypriot daily, *Cyprus Mail*, of 7 October 1998, quoted Greek Cypriot authorities describing the aim of the programme as educating children to "wake up and see Pentadactylos [a mountain range in Northern Cyprus] and not to forget about their villages in the North". The official Greek Cypriot report on education further states:

> "The programme formed the spine of militancy in schools and the route of the people of Cyprus for achieving its visions. The main target is to keep alive the memory of our land still under occupation, to foster and strengthen optimism, confidence and militancy for freedom and return to our fatherland."

Finally, I would like to emphasize that perpetuating the fallacy of treating the illegal Greek Cypriot regime as the legitimate government of the whole island can only block the way towards a settlement. The international community can help promote a peaceful resolution of the dispute by treating the two states on Cyprus equally and fairly.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 108.

(*Signed*) Aytuğ **Plümer**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations A/C.3/53/12

# General Assembly

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**Fifty-third session**
**Third Committee**
Agenda item 110
**Human rights questions**

## Letter dated 2 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on Burma/Myanmar issued by the Presidency of the European Union on 30 October 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

98-33755 (E) 051198 051198

# Annex

## Statement on Burma/Myanmar issued by the Presidency of the European Union on 30 October 1998

The Council has once again considered the deteriorating internal situation in Burma. It remains deeply concerned at the lack of a positive response from the Burmese authorities to the repeated calls for them to take steps towards the promotion of democracy and human rights, and of national reconciliation. It has accordingly extended and strengthened the European Union Common Position through widening the visa ban by explicitly including transit visas under the current ban and its extension to cover Burmese authorities in the tourism sector, while ensuring that the ban is applied rigorously to all individual members of the State Peace and Development Council and the military, together with their families. It also echoes the view, expressed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, that, in the present situation, it is inappropriate for tourists to visit Burma.

In these circumstances, although Burma has become a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union cannot agree to Burmese accession to the European Community-ASEAN Agreement. However, given the importance of the European Community-ASEAN relationship, it has decided to accept a Burmese presence, under special conditions to be agreed upon, at the next meeting of the Joint Committee under the European Community-ASEAN Agreement. This is without prejudice to Burmese representation at future meetings held under that Agreement, which will need to be decided in the light of the situation in Burma.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the countries of the European Free Trade Association members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

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Agenda item 110
**Human rights questions**

## Letter dated 3 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement by the Presidency of the European Union on the common position concerning Nigeria, issued on 30 October 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

*(Signed)* Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

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# Annex

[Original: English and French]

## Statement on the common position concerning Nigeria, issued on 30 October 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the process of democratization which has begun in Nigeria in recent months. It has taken note of the release of a large number of political prisoners, the establishment of the new electoral commission to prepare for the presidential election on 27 February 1999 and the commitment made by the Government of Nigeria to re-establish democratic politics characterized by respect for human rights and based on the rule of law.

Taking into account the positive developments observed in Nigeria, the European Union has, in accordance with its statement of 18 September 1998, reviewed its common positions of 20 November and 4 December 1995 and the sanctions which they introduced. As a result, the Union has decided to lift all sanctions concerning visa restrictions, high-level visits (involving civil and military authorities) and sporting contacts, as well as those concerning the recall of European military attachés posted in Nigeria. The sanctions concerning the arms embargo, military cooperation and the training of military forces, with the exception of units not intended for preparation for combat encouraging respect for human rights and preparing the military for control by a democratic civilian government, remain and are the subject of the new common position, entering into force on 1 November 1998.

In the light of developments observed in Nigeria, and in particular the setting up of a democratically elected civilian government, the European Union is prepared to review, on or before 1 June 1999, the common position which will enter into force on 1 November 1998. With that in mind, it encourages the Government of Nigeria to continue with its transition programme to hand over power to a civilian government in May 1999 following free and fair elections.

Welcoming the developments which should see a civilian government in place in the coming months, the European Union reaffirms its support for the Government of Nigeria in the current democratization process, which should permit the normalization of their relations and enable Nigeria to regain a place within the international community in keeping with its aspirations and capabilities.

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**Third Committee**
Agenda item 110 (c)
**Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives**

# Letter dated 11 November 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Upon the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith the preliminary reaction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the periodic report contained in documents A/53/322 of 11 September 1998 and A/53/322/Add.1 of 30 October 1998 submitted by Jiri Dienstbier, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, sections relating to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

1. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia deplores the fact that the Special Rapporteur did not make any reference in his report to the separatism and terrorism of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Although the Security Council in its resolutions 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998) condemned terrorism and foreign support to terrorists, including arms supplies and military training, the report turns a blind eye to KLA terrorist activities and the assistance rendered it from abroad. The failure of the Special Rapporteur to point to the role the Republic of Albania plays as the main logistic base of the terrorists which they use for recruitment, financing, arming and training and from which they infiltrate armed groups into Kosovo and Metohija over the Yugoslav-Albanian border, devoids the picture of the situation in that autonomous province of the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia of its key elements, which largely explains the escalation of crisis in the province. As it failed to include these all-important data, the report makes no mention of the legitimate right of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to defend themselves with all available legal means from separatist terrorism, aided and abetted from abroad. During 1998, more than 1,300 terrorist attacks have been committed in which more than 200 civilians, 90 members of security forces and 50 members of the Army of Yugoslavia have been killed, while over 250 persons have been kidnapped and over 3,500 Serbian homes looted and destroyed.

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2. In their operations, the Army of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav security forces defended the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and protected the lives of its citizens, taking exclusively legal measures aimed at stamping out separatist terrorism in the province. Implicating the Army and security forces of Yugoslavia in the abuses cited in the report is unfounded altogether. If certain persons exceeded their authority during the operations of these forces, they will be investigated and those charged will be tried and punished.

3. The overall situation in Kosovo and Metohija has radically improved and is quickly returning to normal. This has been brought about primarily by the efforts of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia and their consistent implementation of the agreements the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has signed with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the agreement between Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and United States Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke. Conversely, the representatives of the political parties of the Albanian national minority have neither fulfilled, nor do they intend to fulfil, the basic demands of the international community: to forfeit their separatist goals, to denounce and condemn terrorism and to resume talks with the representatives of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia immediately and unconditionally. In full breach of the Milosevic/Holbrooke agreement, KLA terrorists are taking over and manning illegally and in broad daylight the checkpoints vacated by the Yugoslav security forces. In doing so, they continue to kidnap and massacre police officers and civilians alike, in particular their fellow-Albanians who refused to join their ranks.

4. The Law on Universities has been modelled on similar laws in other European countries and in its essence it is not different at all from the laws regulating State universities in democratic countries. The citizens are expected to honour the laws, not to oppose them.

5. The Law on Public Information guarantees freedom of information, without monopolies and censorship. While not encroaching on the existing freedom of the press, it regulates an area which has long been left out of legal attention and establishes mechanisms to preclude abuses. The new Law does not ban the transmission of foreign news programmes; it introduces the principle of reciprocity, thus favouring the flow of information in both directions.

6. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia reiterates once again that it is ready to continue its cooperation with Jiri Dienstbier, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, and Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This has been borne out by the Agreement on the status of the UNHCR office in Belgrade signed in Geneva on 6 November 1998.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly under agenda item 110 (c).

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanović**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations A/C.3/53/15

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**Third Committee**
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**Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives**

## Letter dated 12 November 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In his statements to the Third Committee on 5 and 6 November 1998, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations made a series of incorrect and ill-intended allegations regarding the situation in the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija and the policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In that context, I have been instructed by my Government to state the following:

1. In order to be able to make credible statements regarding the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, the Republic of Albania is first to do the following:

(a) Revoke the 1991 decision recognizing the phantom "Republic of Kosovo" and close down the diplomatic representative office of that illegal creation in Tirana, thus abiding, albeit belatedly, by the basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of the United Nations concerning respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States and non-interference in their internal affairs;

(b) Comply with the demands in Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998) that it has been in contempt of, cut the arms supply and financial flows and desist from rendering support to the terrorists of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo and Metohija;

(c) Close down KLO terrorist and foreign mercenary boot camps in Tropoje, Bajram Curri and Kuks.

Instead of upholding international law and complying with the demands of the international community, the Government of the Republic of Albania has resorted to cheap propaganda, based on selected parts of reports of the representatives of the international community.

2. The statement that "ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have been for decades submitted to ethnic repression and intolerance and that they have been denied their most basic human

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rights" is not true. It is true that the separatist leaders of the Albanian political parties in Kosovo and Metohija have prevented the members of the Albanian national minority to use a broad spectrum of human and minority rights that have been granted to them by the Constitutions of the Republic of Serbia and Yugoslavia since 1946. All these rights have been extensively used by the members of 26 other national minorities in the Republic of Serbia. The separatist leaders of the Albanian political parties prevented the members of the Albanian national minority from using these rights in an attempt to create a pretext and justification for their policy of breaking up the territorial integrity of Serbia, causing the secession of Kosovo and Metohija and joining it to the Republic of Albania in a drive to realize the project of Greater Albania.

3. The claim that the Serbian authorities pursue "an open policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing supported by brutal military and police action against innocent Albanian civilians" is both untrue and ludicrous. The number of Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija in the last 50 years has quadrupled, whereas the number of Serbs has been reduced by two thirds in that same period. In the last anti-terrorist operation directed at KLA terrorists, the security forces of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia defended the territorial integrity and the lives and property of the citizens of their country. After all, it was the escalation of terrorism that necessitated the security operation and the blame for the plight of civilians, ethnic Albanian and non-Albanian alike, rests squarely with the terrorists of KLA and the outside forces and countries, primarily the Republic of Albania, aiding and abetting them. The Yugoslav authorities have always made a clear distinction between the civilian members of the Albanian national minority and terrorists. This approach was maintained throughout the security operation. Ethnic Albanian civilians were given protection against terrorists who forced them to leave their homes and were given generous humanitarian and material support to repair their houses and resume normal life upon their return home.

4. Steeped in propaganda, like the mantra of a 90 per cent Albanian population of Kosovo and Metohija, the statement distorts some basic facts about that Serbian province. The separatist leaders of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija prevented their fellow Albanians from participating in the last census, while the results of former censuses had been abused by Albanian leaders in Kosovo and Metohija to the detriment of other national minorities and ethnic groups living in the province in substantial numbers. In addition to 250,000 Serbs and Montenegrins, 150,000 Muslims of Serbian extraction, 150,000 Romanies and members of other national minorities (Turks, Vlachs, Croats and others) also live in Kosovo and Metohija. Accordingly, the percentage of ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo and Metohija is much lower than the one often quoted for propaganda purposes and is realistically estimated to stand at between 60 and 70 per cent.

By its claim that a "colonialist rule" has been imposed on Kosovo and Metohija, the Republic of Albania is in breach of the 1913 London Treaty, the 1919 Versailles Treaty and the 1946 Paris Peace Treaty. All these treaties confirm that Kosovo and Metohija belongs to Serbia and Yugoslavia and that they have legal authority in that province. Alongside the 1991 recognition of the phantom Republic of Kosovo, the claim serves to stake out the aspirations of the Republic of Albanian towards that part of the territory of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

5. The statement is telling proof that the Republic of Albania is not guided by the interests of the international community, which coincide with the vital interests of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in promoting the ongoing political process and solving all problems in Kosovo and Metohija exclusively by political means. The statement is therefore repetitive and replete with inaccurate stereotypical allegations of the Republic

of Albania against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its policy. It says nothing about the refusal of the leaders of the Albanian political parties in Kosovo and Metohija to fulfil the demands in Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998): to forfeit separatism; to condemn terrorism; and to resume dialogue immediately and unconditionally. Furthermore, the statement is silent about the fact that armed KLA terrorists sabotage the agreement signed between the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, and the United States Special Envoy, Richard Holbrooke, and continue to carry out terrorist provocations, intercepting, abducting and killing members of security forces and civilians, thus increasing the number of innocent victims and threatening the peace process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 110 (c).

*(Signed)* Vladislav **Jovanović**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Fifty-third session
**Third Committee**
Agenda item 105
**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

## Letter dated 17 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that for technical reasons the delegation of Azerbaijan was unable to speak on agenda item 105 during its consideration by the Third Committee at the current session of the General Assembly.

In that connection, I have the honour to transmit the text of the statement by the delegation of Azerbaijan (see annex), and to request you to have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 105.

(*Signed*) Eldar **Kouliev**
Permanent Representative

98-36410 (E) 231198 231198

## Annex

# Statement by the delegation of Azerbaijan on agenda item 105, "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", delivered to the Third Committee at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

Azerbaijan, as a State with about a million refugees and internally displaced persons on its soil, believes that one of the fundamental aspects in the joint efforts by the States Members of the United Nations is the most rapid possible resolution of internal and international armed conflicts by peaceful means and the return of the millions of refugees to their places of permanent residence. Coordination of the international community's efforts in this direction should come from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In 1988, 1989 and 1990, Azerbaijan took in about 200,000 Azerbaijani refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Armenia. As a result of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, over 20 per cent of our country fell under occupation and 800,000 citizens were forced to move to other regions and towns in Azerbaijan. For Azerbaijan's population of seven and a half million, a million refugees and internally displaced persons is a catastrophic figure. Armenia's continuing aggression against and blockade of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic prevents a solution to the problem of return of the refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of permanent residence. At the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit in Lisbon in 1996, the world community recognized three principles on whose basis the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia should be solved by peaceful means and the refugees and internally displaced persons should be guaranteed a safe return to their places of permanent residence. We hope that the international organizations will provide us with the necessary support to achieve peace between the two States and the most rapid return possible of the refugees and the internally displaced persons to their homes.

We fully approve of the practice that UNHCR has of working together with international and humanitarian organizations such as OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We particularly note the fact that UNHCR staff are doing their jobs in the "line of fire" and that the courage they have shown in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in countries where military operations have taken place has helped save thousands of lives. Azerbaijan cooperates closely with UNHCR: the cooperation agreement between UNHCR and the Government of Azerbaijan, which was signed in 1995, and the State programme of assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons have laid a firm foundation for improving their situation in Azerbaijan. UNHCR staff in Azerbaijan are continuing to provide comprehensive assistance to the refugees, while the Government is implementing measures to provide material assistance and provide preferential terms for refugees and internally displaced persons: in Azerbaijan, they are exempt from all forms of taxation and receive a monthly financial and material allowance and free education and health care, while construction of camps for them is continuing. This month, President Aliyev spoke at an expanded Cabinet meeting in favour of improving the work of the State committee for refugee affairs in matters to do with material, social and cultural provision for refugees and internally displaced persons.

However, we note with regret that in neither of her two statements in the Security Council and in the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session did the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Ogata, touch upon the refugee situation in the Transcaucasus, in particular the million refugees and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan, although her deputy, Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, recently spent some time in Azerbaijan and acquainted himself fully with the situation there. We believe that in the absence of a solution to the armed conflict in the Transcaucasus, UNHCR must not discontinue its activities in the region and must continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees and internally displaced persons there to at least the same extent as in previous years. We particularly thank the donor States, whose assistance, which has been provided since the moment Azerbaijan became independent, has enabled us to stand our ground in the face of aggression and will help also in the return of the refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of permanent residence and into reconstruction of their homes which were destroyed in the war.